

We Claim:

1. A control management system for software controllable devices comprising in combination:
 - (a) a communication network;
 - (b) a plurality of software controllable devices coupled to the network wherein each software controllable device has at least one property to be controlled and wherein each software controllable device has an associated control object that exposes the properties of the device to be controlled;
 - (c) at least one client operatively coupled to the network and having a user interface, the client being capable of changing a value of the property of at least one device via the network; and
 - (d) an event manager coupled to the network and having stored the property values of each device and the properties to which the client subscribed, wherein the event manager when polled by the client provides the client with an update of any changes to the properties to which the client has subscribed.
2. The control management system of claim 1, wherein the event manager has a persistence store container identifying each control object of the devices to be controlled.
3. The control management system of claim 2, wherein each control object in the persistence store has associated parameters selected from the group consisting of an identification of the control object, a name of the control object, a location of the associated device, an exposed properties listing of the associated device, and a property descriptor.
4. The control management system of claim 3, wherein the property descriptor enumerates the exposed properties of the control object.

5. The control management system of claim 1, wherein the event manager has a custom container identifying each control object based on locations of each of the associated plurality of software controllable devices.
6. The control management system of claim 1, wherein each property stored in the event manager has an associated time stamp indicating when the property last changed value.
7. The control management system of claim 1, wherein the event manager has a client time stamp indicating when the client last queried the event manager to property change information.
8. The control management system of claim 1, wherein the client subscribes to at least one controllable property that the client can control and wherein the event manager associates the controllable property with the client.
9. The control management system of claim 1 wherein the event manager module has computer-executable instructions for performing the steps of: (i) receiving a request from a client for status information regarding at least one property of a device wherein the request provides a time stamp information for the client; (ii) comparing the time stamp information for the client and the time stamp corresponding to the property that the client requests; and (iii) if the time stamp information for the client is earlier than the time stamp corresponding to the property that the client requests, providing the property value information to the client.
10. The control management system of claim 1, wherein the client communicates with the event manager via eXtensible Markup Language (XML).
11. The control management system of claim 1, wherein the software controllable devices communicate with the event manager via a component object model (COM).

12. The control management system of claim 11, wherein the client is not COM-enabled.
13. The control management system of claim 1, wherein the software controllable devices communicate with the event manager via a Distributed Component Object Model (DCOM).
14. The control management system of claim 1, wherein the devices are selected from the group consisting of electronics, appliances, furniture, and fixtures.
15. An event manager for use with a networked control management system comprising in combination:
 - (a) a first interface for communicating with at least one client;
 - (b) a second interface for communicating with at least one control object representative of a software controllable device; and
 - (c) a persistence store having stored therein a listing of the control objects in the control management system, wherein each control object in the listing identifies each property to be controlled, wherein each property has a property value and a time stamp of when the property value was last changed.
16. The event manager of claim 15, wherein the persistence store has subscription information of the properties to which a client has subscribed and wherein the event manager further comprises:
 - (d) computer-executable instructions for performing the steps of: (i) in response to receiving a request for status information, identifying those subscribed properties that changed property values since a previous request from the client; and (ii) providing updated property value information to the client for those subscribed properties that changed values since the previous request.

17. A method of providing updates to a client relating to a plurality of software controllable devices in a networked management system comprising the steps of:
 - (a) maintaining a list of device properties wherein each property has an associated time stamp indicative of when the device property was last changed;
 - (b) maintaining subscription information indicative of the device properties to which the client has subscribed, forming a subscribed device properties;
 - (c) receiving a request from the client for status information;
 - (d) identifying those subscribed device properties that changed property values since a previous request from the client; and
 - (e) providing updated property value information to the client for those properties that changed values since the previous request.
18. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 17.
19. A method for providing a client information about at least one device, wherein the device and the client are part of a networked management system, the method comprising the steps of:
 - (a) storing, in a central memory coupled to the network, property information for the device;
 - (b) receiving change information from the network indicating that a property of the device has changed;
 - (c) storing, in the central memory, the change information relating to the property of the device;
 - (d) storing, in the central memory, a property time stamp corresponding to the change information indicating when the property of the device changed;
 - (e) receiving a request for status information from a client regarding the property, wherein the client has a client time stamp that is earlier than the property time stamp; and
 - (f) providing the change information to the client via the network,

wherein the client has accurate information regarding the device to be controlled.

20. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 19.
21. In a network comprising a plurality of clients, a plurality of software controllable devices, and a computer-readable storage medium, a distributed system for controlling the devices, comprising in combination:
- (a) at least one control object residing in the computer-readable medium accessible to a software controllable device and exposing controllable properties for the respective device, the control object accepting and issuing messages to and from the respective device;
 - (b) an event manager module residing in the computer-readable medium accepting and issuing messages to the control object and storing the exposed controllable properties and property values of the devices; and
 - (c) a user interface residing in the client adapted to receive property value information from the event manager, and accept and issue control messages to and from the event manager,
- wherein the event manager serves as an interface for the client to issue commands to the software controllable devices and to receive updates of any changes to the properties values.
22. The distributed system of claim 21, wherein the event manager has a persistence store container identifying each control object of the devices to be controlled.
23. The distributed system of claim 22, wherein each control object in the persistence store has associated parameters selected from the group consisting of an identification of the control object, a name of the control object, a location of the associated device, an exposed properties listing of the associated device, and a property descriptor.

24. The distributed system of claim 23, wherein the proper descriptor enumerates the exposed properties of the control object.
25. The distributed system of claim 21, wherein the event manager has a custom container identifying each control object based on locations of the associated devices.
26. The distributed system of claim 21, wherein each property stored in the event manager has an associated time stamp indicating when the property last changed value.
27. The distributed system of claim 21, wherein the event manager has a client time stamp indicating when the client last queried the event manager to property change information.
28. The distributed system of claim 21, wherein the client subscribes to at least one controllable property that the client can control and wherein the event manager associates the controllable property with the client.
29. The distributed system of claim 21 wherein the event manager module has computer-executable instructions for performing the steps of: (i) receiving a request from a client for status information regarding at least one property of a device wherein the request provides a time stamp information for the client; (ii) comparing the time stamp information for the client and the time stamp corresponding to the property that the client requests; and (iii) if the time stamp information for the client is earlier than the time stamp corresponding to the property that the client requests, providing the property value information to the client.
30. The distributed system of claim 21, wherein the client communicates with the event manager via eXtensible Markup Language (XML).

31. The distributed system of claim 21, wherein the software controllable devices communicate with the event manager via a component object model (COM).
32. The distributed system of claim 31, wherein the client is not COM-enabled.
33. The distributed system of claim 21, wherein the software controllable devices communicate with the event manager via a Distributed Component Object Model (DCOM).
34. The distributed system of claim 21, wherein the devices are selected from the group consisting of electronics, appliances, furniture, and fixtures.